







230

Washington's Transportation Plan

- 230.01 Introduction
- 230.02 Plan Components
- 230.03 WTP Implementation
- 230.04 Environmental Issues in the WTP
- 230.05 Exhibits

Key to Icons

-  Memorandum of Understanding.
-  Reference document, such as a manual, book, or published article.
-  Permit or application for a permit, approval or certification.
-  Web site.*

230.01 Introduction

Adoption of a comprehensive, balanced, state-wide transportation plan is one of the primary responsibilities of the Washington Transportation Commission under RCW 47.01.071. Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP) is a 20-year, fiscally constrained document that outlines the service objectives and strategies for maintaining, operating, preserving, and improving the state transportation system. It also outlines a financial funding strategy that identifies the responsibilities for implementation and establishes needs for the system.

The WTP addresses transportation facilities owned and operated by the state: state highways, the Washington State Ferries, and state-owned airports. It also addresses facilities and services that the state does not own, but has an interest in, as they are vital to the entire transportation system. These are: public transportation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, marine ports and navigation, nonmotorized transportation, and avi-

ation. System plans for each of these transportation modes are incorporated into the WTP.

The WTP is developed in cooperation with WSDOT regions and divisions; city, county, and transit officials; and representatives of private carriers, with extensive public involvement.


The WTP **will be** updated periodically in response to changing federal and state legislation, updated growth and revenue projections, and emerging issues. The current WTP was adopted in **February 2002**, covering the period from **2003 to 2022**. Ultimately, the Plan and its component system plans will be updated at regular intervals.

For information on the WTP, the current update process, and related corridor planning, see the WSDOT web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

Click on Site Index, then T, then Transportation Planning, then Washington's Transportation Plan.

Or by direct link:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ppsc/wtp/>

230.02 Plan Components

(1) State Highway System Plan

The WTP contains the State Highway System Plan (HSP) which provides service objectives and strategies for maintaining, operating, preserving, and improving our state highways. (WTP, April 1996) The HSP is updated every two years and defines service level objectives, action strategies, and costs. It includes an extensive public involvement process.

The HSP describes the major highway programs including highway maintenance (Program M), traffic operations (Program Q), highway preservation (Program P), highway improvement (Program I), highway safety (Subprogram I2),

* Web sites and navigation referenced in this section are subject to change. For the most current links, please refer to the online version of the EPM, available through the EAO home page: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/environmental/>

economic initiatives (Subprogram I3), and environmental retrofit (Subprogram I4).

For information on the state highway system, see WSDOT's web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

Click on Site Index, then H, then Highways and Local Programs.

Or by direct link:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/HOMEPAGE/HLPHP.html>

(2) State Ferry System Plan

The State Ferry System Plan is comprised of three service objectives: ferry system maintenance, ferry preservation, and ferry system improvements. WSDOT is also preparing a Long-Range Ferry Plan to develop ferry capacity needs beyond 2001.

Information on WSF is online at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Ferries/>

(3) State Airport System Plan

The State Airport System Plan is comprised of three service objectives: airport maintenance, airport preservation, and airport improvement. WSDOT manages 16 airports across the state that serve as staging areas for search and rescue operations and provide emergency landing sites for aircraft in distress.

(4) Public Transportation and Intercity Rail Passenger Plan

The Public Transportation and Intercity Rail Passenger Plan for Washington State integrates the intercity passenger rail and public transportation elements of the WTP into a single document. This plan addresses the state-interest components of the transportation system. The full text of this plan is available on the WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division web site at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/pubtran/>

(5) Freight Rail System Plan

The Freight Rail System Plan has three service objectives:

- Ensure adequate mainline freight capacity and safety and enhance access to and capacity of intermodal terminals.
- Preserve and enhance service on branch lines, promote continued service on light density lines, and preserve essential lines threatened with abandonment.
- Identify and preserve essential rail corridors for future rail service.

(6) Marine Ports and Navigation System Plan

The Marine Ports and Navigation System Plan has five service objectives:

- Increase Washington ports' share of the West Coast trade and support the development and growth of port related tourist activities.
- Ensure adequate landside access to and capacity of intermodal terminals.
- Ensure adequate waterside access to and capacity of transportation routes.
- Facilitate and support port actions and investments in port districts that increase speed and efficiency of intermodal transfers.
- Enable marine ports to continue to operate and expand within their shoreline locations while adequately protecting the natural environment.

(7) Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan has two service objectives:

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Increase the use of bicycling and walking for transportation purposes, principally utilitarian and commuting trips and connections to intermodal facilities.

(8) Aviation System Plan

The Aviation System Plan has five service objectives:

- Ensure adequacy and improve general aviation facilities to meet current and future growth and demand in support of the state's trade and economic vitality.
- Promote the development of adequate air carrier airport facilities, both airside and landside to meet preservation, growth, and safety needs.
- Ensure the highest level of aviation safety.
- Provide emergency response capability and public safety through search and rescue and by maintaining, preserving, and improving a system of general aviation and commercial aviation services and facilities.
- Facilitate compliance by pilots, aircraft owners, and airport operators with state aviation regulations to ensure safe aviation and provide funding for general aviation services and facilities.

Information on the Aviation Division is online at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Aviation/>

230.03 WTP Implementation

From the WTP, a six-year implementation program is developed. The Six-Year Plan is constrained to the investment level for a three-biennium period and is used in the budget development process. Only the first two years of the Six-Year Plan contain specific projects. The last four years contain funding levels for the different programs.

230.04 Environmental Issues in the WTP

(1) Statutory Considerations

Section 1204 of TEA-21 exempts the WTP from consideration as a federal action subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The reasons given include the reasonable opportunity for public comment on the plan and that the individual projects included in the plan are subject to review under NEPA.

The SEPA Rules (WAC 468-12-800(18)) provides a similar categorical exemption for the WTP and the various implementing plans.

The statewide multi-modal transportation plan statute (RCW 47.06.040) directs WSDOT to identify and document potential affected environmental resources and issues, including, but not limited to, wetlands, storm water runoff, flooding, air quality, fish passage, and wildlife habitat during the development of the WTP. WSDOT must coordinate with all relevant environmental regulatory authorities and local governments. Finally, WSDOT must give the regulatory agencies an opportunity to review the environmental plans and the agencies must respond in a timely manner.

The statute also states that “environmental identification and documentation as provided in RCW 47.01.300 and in this section is not intended to create a private right of action or require an environmental impact statement as provided in chapter 43.21C RCW.”

The WTP is analogous to a city or county comprehensive plan under GMA. Most of these comprehensive plans were accompanied by environmental impact statements (EIS). The same considerations that cities and counties applied to these comprehensive plans would apply to WSDOT's decision on whether to prepare an EIS for the WTP and its implementing plans.

(2) Environmental Retrofit Program

The Environmental Retrofit Program is one of the subprograms of the HSP. The objective is to retrofit state highway facilities as appropriate to reduce existing environmental impacts. The environmental retrofit program is in addition to WSDOT's commitment of performing appropriate environmental mitigation as a part of all other highway system projects.

The Environmental Retrofit Program focuses on:

- **Noise Barriers** – Adding noise mitigation along state highways where neighborhoods are exposed to unacceptable noise levels as defined by federal statute.
- **Fish Passage** – Targeting the removal of fish barriers along state highways.
- **Stormwater Discharge** – Constructing new stormwater treatment facilities to treat runoff from existing untreated pavements.
- **Air Quality** – Implementing all transportation control measures identified in the SIP. Currently, there are no transportation control measures specifically identified in either SIP or the HSP.

(3) Public Transportation and Intercity Rail Passenger Plan

This plan includes as an objective, “to facilitate integration of public transportation in land use development including permitting and environmental impact processes.”

(4) Marine Ports and Navigation Plan

This plan includes a service objective to address the environment. There are four proposed actions to support the objective:

- Expedite the regulatory process to enable Washington marine ports to compete in the world market while adequately protecting the natural environment.
- Pursue regulatory process reform to ensure that regulatory agencies accommodate the needs of those port facilities and their sup-

porting inland transportation and navigation channels as being of statewide significance.

- Advocate for adequate disposal sites for the disposal of contaminated dredged materials.
- Facilitate the ability to use federal EPA super fund monies to clean up designated sites.

230.05 Exhibits

None.